

Using ATOP and K10+ outcome measures in multicultural AOD counselling –insights, challenges, and opportunities

Authors

Rakib Islam, Nirekha De Silva, Teguh Syahbahar, Sinatt Tang, David Kelly, Dennis Kaip

Odyssey House NSW, Multicultural Programs, Sydney, Australia

Presenter's email: rakib.islam@odysseyhouse.com.au

Background:

Outcome measurement is essential in AOD services to monitor progress, assess effectiveness, and inform clinical decisions (Kelly et al., 2021). The ATOP and K10+ are widely used tools in these settings (Deacon et al., 2021; Ryan et al., 2014). However, insights drawn from the clinical practice of Multicultural AOD Clinicians at Odyssey, as well as from Odyssey House NSW's *Lived Experience Conversations on Substance Use* and *Substance Use Forums with Community and Religious Leaders*, highlight that standardised tools may not fully capture the experiences of clients from CALD backgrounds. Factors such as translation difficulties, stigma, and culturally shaped response styles can compromise the reliability, validity, and cultural sensitivity of these instruments.

Description of Intervention:

This presentation reviews ATOP and K10+ use in multicultural counselling at Odyssey House NSW, drawing on CALD client data, feedback from clients and clinicians, case studies, and bicultural counsellor reflections. Strategies trialed include pre-assessment orientation, simplified translations with interpreter support, culturally contextualised questions, and narrative and visual aids.

Effectiveness:

Many CALD clients were unfamiliar with psychological scales and needed support to engage. Literal translations often caused confusion, while narrative supplements helped clarify score changes. Clinicians reported greater confidence using outcome data when supported by cultural supervision. Key challenges included language barriers, lack of validated tools, and time constraints.

Conclusion:

ATOP and K10+ are effective in multicultural AOD counselling when applied with cultural sensitivity. Future steps include co-developing culturally safe guidelines, training clinicians in responsive data use, and piloting visual and narrative-based tools.

Implications for Practice or Policy:

Practice – Use pre-assessment engagement, bilingual support, and embed narratives in outcome tracking.

Policy – Fund culturally validated tool development and tailored training.

Research – Promote participatory research on outcome tool experiences and alternatives.

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